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**UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH
CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA**
Institute for Public Affairs

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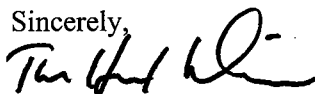
Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Hon. Steny Hoyer
Hon. Louise Slaughter, Hon. Barney Frank
U.S. House of Representatives
By Fax & Electronic Mail

Dear Leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives:

We write on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America to urge you to ensure that the Federal Housing Finance Reform Act of 2005 (H.R. 1461) contains no provisions which would be disruptive to participation of the many religiously affiliated organizations in affordable housing programs.

Proposals that would limit eligible recipients to organizations that have as their "primary purpose" the provision of affordable housing would effectively prevent many Jewish community entities from participating in Affordable Housing Fund programs. Similarly, proposals that would prohibit recipients from engaging in voter registration and lobbying activities with their own funds in order to receive affordable housing funds would force many Jewish agencies to choose between participating in Affordable Housing Fund programs or engaging in constitutionally protected voter registration and lobbying activities with their own funds. We urge you to oppose inclusion of these kinds of unnecessary limitations and prohibitions in H.R. 1461 and, if they are to be considered by the House on the floor, to ensure that these provisions receive a full debate and up or down vote.

It is critical to note that such proposals are as objectionable when it comes to housing funds and free speech rights as they are objectionable when proposed with regard to other social welfare program funds and other constitutionally protected rights. As is the case with many other federally funded social-welfare programs in which faith-based entities participate, there are appropriate ways to write safeguards into the legislation to prevent the diversion of funds to uses other than what they are intended without requiring recipients to forego their constitutionally protected rights as a condition for participating. We urge you to uphold these principles in the context of H.R. 1461.

Sincerely,

Rabbi T. Hersh Weinreb


Nathan J. Diament